

## 27. REDISCOVERY OF THE BLACK MICROHYLID FROG, *MELANOBATRACHUS INDICUS* (BEDDOME 1878)

(With one plate)

The monotypic genus *Melanobatrachus* is endemic to the Western Ghats of South India. *Melanobatrachus indicus*, commonly called the rare black microhylid, was first described by Beddome in 1878. This description was based on a few specimens collected from "the Annamalais and the ghat range to the south of those mountains" (Beddome 1878). Subsequent descriptions of the species were based on the initial collection made by Beddome.

I have been conducting systematic surveys of amphibians in Kalakad-Mundunthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) from May 1996. KMTR falls within the South-Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu State. This survey was part of the studies on the impact of fragmentation of rain forests on herpetofauna and small mammals in the Western Ghats. One individual of *M. indicus* was seen in Kakachi in (KMTR) at 1200 m altitude, on 26th June, 1996. This individual was sighted at 1920 hours on a rock at the edge of wet-evergreen forest. Previous collections were made at altitudes ranging from 1000 to 1500 m (Parker 1934). They were reported from moist evergreen forest in a torpid state, curled up in a ball (Beddome 1878). The localities of the specimens collected

earlier were Annamalai hills, North Travancore, South West India and Cochin (Parker 1934). The present sighting would fall within the old Travancore province reported earlier. However, distribution of the species in the Western Ghats remains confounding, due to lack of information on the exact locality of earlier collections.

The external morphology and colour of the microhylid sighted corresponds well with the description provided by Boulenger (1890). The scarlet blotches on the underside of the forelimb and thigh region were prominent. The skin was pustular, with pustules arranged in five longitudinal rows on the dorsum. It had small pale blue spots on the flanks and on the sides of limbs. It is interesting to note that this species has not been recorded in any of the surveys or collection-based studies in the region since its description in 1878. There is clear indication that this species is rare and intensive surveys are required to gather more information on this enigmatic species.

October 10, 1996 KARTHIKEYAN VASUDEVAN  
Wildlife Institute of India,  
P.O. Box 18, Dehradun 248 001.

### REFERENCES

BEDDOME, LT. COL. R.H. (1878): Description of a new Batrachian from South India belonging to the family Phryniscidae. *Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.* 722-723.

BOULENGER, G.A. (1890): Fauna of British India, Reptilia and Batrachia. London, Taylor and Francis.

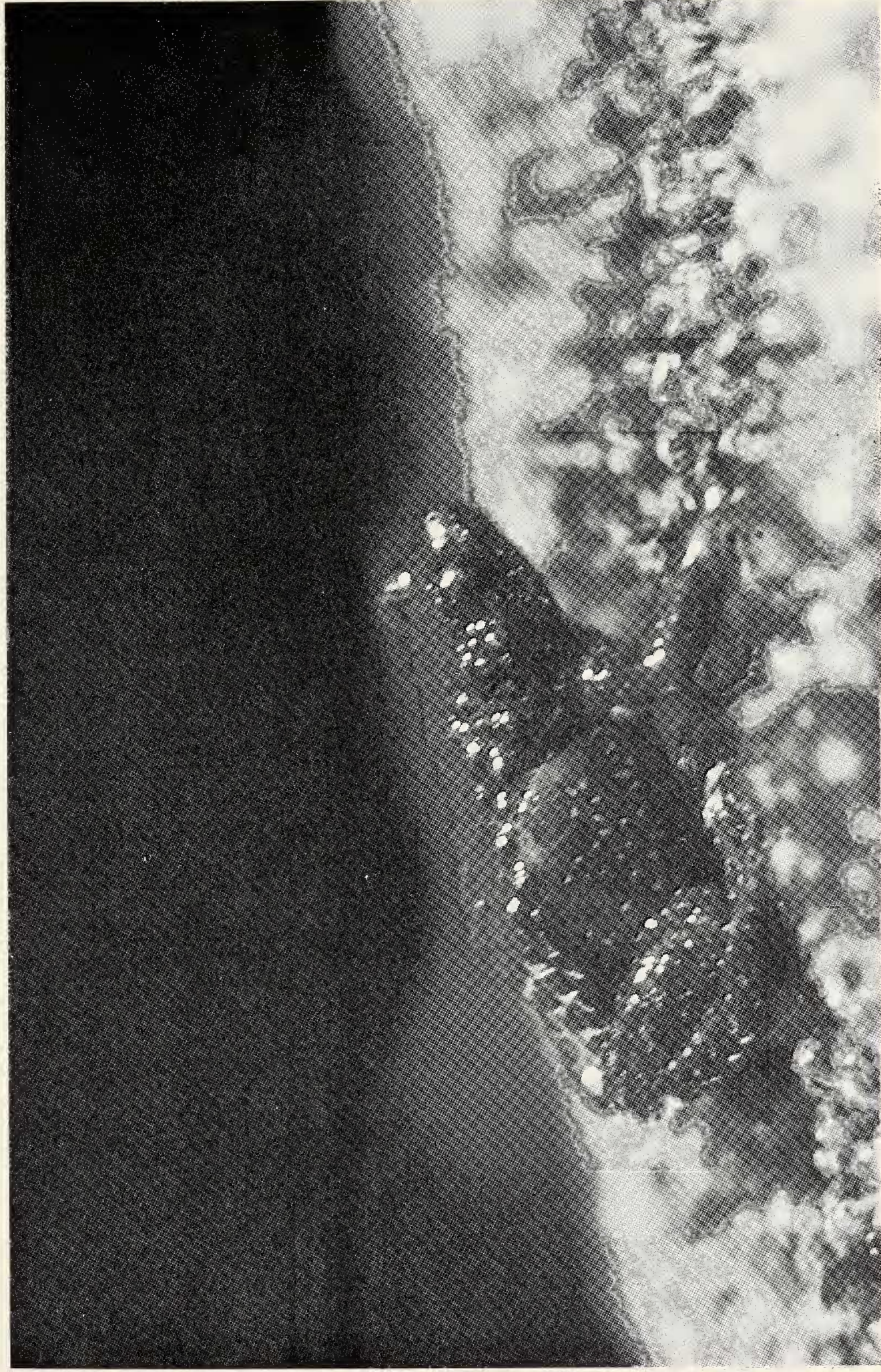
PARKER, H.W. (1934): A monograph of the frogs of the family Microhylidae. London.

## 28. NEW RECORD OF *SCHISMATORHYNCHUS (NUKTA) NUKTA* (SYKES) (PISCES: CYPRINIDAE) FROM MOYAR RIVER, TAMIL NADU

During the course of our studies on the status and conservation perspectives of rare and endemic fishes of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), a specimen of *Schismatorhynchus (Nukta) nukta* (Sykes), a cyprinid fish was collected from the river

Moyar, near Thengumarada in Tamil Nadu. This species, commonly called "Nukta", has not been previously recorded from Tamil Nadu. The southernmost limit of its distribution is, till now, up to Karnataka (Talwar and Jhingran, 1991) and this





S.U. SARAVANAKUMAR

The black microhylid frog *Melanobatrachus indicus*: intensive studies are required to gather more information on this enigmatic species.